

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3900
INFO AMEMBASSY RANGOON
AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 23426

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFIP, FR
SUBJECT: FRANCOIS GEOFFROY-DECHAUME, NEW FRENCH
AMBASSADOR TO RANGOON

1. FRANCOIS GEOFFROY-DECHAUME, A CAREER FRENCH DIPLOMAT, HAS JUST BEEN NAMED NEW FRENCH AMBASSADOR TO RANGOON, REPLACING HUBERT DE LA BRUCHOLLERIE, WHO HAS BEEN AT POST SINCE 1972. BORN IN 1915, GEOFFROY-DECHAUME BEGAN HIS CAREER IN 1943 AND SERVED BRIEFLY AS VICE CONSUL IN NANKING IN 1944. FROM THEN UNTIL 1946, HE WAS ATTACHED TO THE FRENCH EMBASSY IN PEKING AFTER WHICH HE SERVED IN THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION UNTIL 1949. FROM 1949 TO 1952 HE WAS SECOND SECRETARY AT MEXICO CITY, THEN SERVED AS FIRST SECRETARY IN BANGKOK (1952 TO 1957), HOLDING AT THE SAME TIME THE POST OF PERMANENT FRENCH REPRESENTATIVE FOR ASIA AND THE FAR EAST TO THE UN'S ECONOMIC COMMISSION. GEOFFROY-DECHAUME WAS ATTACHED TO THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION FROM 1958 TO 1963, FIRST IN THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS DEPARTMENT, THEN IN THE CULTURAL AND TECHNICAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT. FROM 1963 TO 1964, HE WAS OBSERVER AT THE INSTITUTE OF HIGH STUDIES OF NATIONAL DEFENSE. HE WAS BACK IN ASIAN AFFAIRS IN THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION FROM 1965 TO 1966, THEN SERVED AS SECOND COUNSELOR IN PEKING FROM 1967 TO 1969. HE WAS FIRST COUNSELOR IN NEW DELHI FROM 1969 TO 1971, AND CONSUL GENERAL IN
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HONG KONG FROM 1972 UNTIL HIS PRESENT NOMINATION.

2. GEOFFROY-DECHAUME HAS A MIXED REPUTATION IN THE QUAI. ALTHOUGH CONSIDERED INTELLIGENT AND IMAGINATIVE, HE IS FREQUENTLY CRITICIZED AS BEING ECCENTRIC IN HIS POLITICAL JUDGMENTS AND VERY DIFFICULT TO WORK WITH OR FOR. HE HAS WIDE INTERESTS, AND HIS FAMILY IS INVOLVED IN THE FRENCH CULTURAL WORLD OF ART, MUSIC AND LITERATURE. RANGOON WILL BE HIS FIRST AND LAST AMBASSADORIAL POST, AND QUAI OFFICIALS NOTED THAT UNLIKE THE APPOINTMENTS OF DUZER TO VIENTIANE, MALO TO HANOI AND BOLLE TO MALAYSIA, HIS APPOINTMENT IS NOT AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE QUAI EFFORT TO BE MORE ACTIVIST AND LESS TIED TO OLD FRENCH STEREOTYPES IN ITS APPROACH TO SOUTHEAST ASIA. GEOFFROY-DECHAUME IS CONSIDERED WELL DISPOSED TOWARD THE U.S., AND AMERICAN COLLEAGUES MAY FIND HIM EASIER TO DEAL WITH THAN HIS OWN STAFF.

3. CONGEN HONG KONG MAY WISH TO COMMENT.
GAMMON

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